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FM BOGOTA 182230Z JUNE 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 161 OF 18 JUNE

FI (IMMEDIATE) BRASILIA, LIMA, UKMIS NEW YORK (PRIORITY) MEXICO
CITY, MONTEVIDEO, SANTIAGO, WASHINGTON, CARACAS, UKMIS GENEVA

YOUR TELNO 153 TO BRUSSELS: FALKLANDS: CEASEFIRE AND PRISONERS

1. I WAS SUMMONED TO THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AT 1500 HOURS LOCAL TIME TODAY. AFTER GREETING ME TURBAY SAID THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTER (WHO HAD JOINED HIM FOR A PREVIOUS FUNCTION) WOULD EXPLAIN WHAT HE WISHED TO BE CONVEYED.

2. CARLOS LEMOS SAID THAT THE COLOMBIANS HAD CONSIDERED THE REQUEST IN YOUR TUR OF WHICH THE SUBSTANCE HAD BEEN CONVEYED TO THE MFA ON 17 JUNE (MY TELNO 160: NOT TO ALL). OVERNIGHT THERE HAD BEEN TWO DEVELOPMENTS. FIRST HE UNDERSTOOD THAT ARRANGEMENTS HAD BEEN AGREED FOR ARGENTINE PRISONERS TO BE CONVEYED BY SEA TO PUERTO MADRYN. SECONDLY GALTIERI HAD FALLEN AND THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN BUENOS AIRES WAS OBSCURE. WITH THE QUESTION OF REPATRIATION APPARENTLY ON THE WAY TO A SOLUTION AND WITH THE POLITICAL TEMPERATURE IN BUENOS AIRES BOTH RAISED AND UNCERTAIN, HE DOUBTED WHETHER PRESSURE BY COLOMBIA TO DECLARE THAT HOSTILITIES WERE AT AN END WOULD PRODUCE A POSITIVE RESPONSE NOW FROM THE ARGENTINES. TURBAY HAD THEREFORE AGREED WITH PRESIDENT BELAUNDE AND FIGUEIREDO THAT COLOMBIA, PERU AND BRAZIL SHOULD JOINTLY OFFER TO PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION, BY SEA OR BY AIR, TO FACILITATE THE REPATRIATION OF THE REMAINING ARGENTINE PRISONERS. THIS WOULD BE A HUMANITARIAN GESTURE MADE TO BOTH GOVERNMENTS, WHICH COULD BE OF PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE AND HELP POLITICALLY TOWARDS SECURING THE CONFIRMATION ON THE ARGENTINE SIDE OF THE CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES WHICH HE AGREED WAS ESSENTIAL. HE WAS NOW CONVEYING THIS OFFER FORMALLY TO ME ON BEHALF OF THE THREE GOVERNMENTS. HE HAD ALREADY DONE SO BY TELEPHONE TO THE ARGENTINE AMBASSADOR.

3. I SAID THAT AGREEMENT FOR THE RECEPTION OF ARGENTINE PRISONERS AT PUERTO MADRYN WAS WELCOME, AND THAT TO A CERTAIN EXTENT THE QUESTIONS OF REPATRIATION AND A DECLARATION BY ARGENTINA OF AN END TO HOSTILITIES APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN DISENTANGLED. I UNDERSTOOD THAT SOME 5000 PRISONERS WERE BEING TRANSPORTED UNDER THE PRESENT EXERCISE. I APPRECIATED THE OFFER BY THE THREE GOVERNMENTS TO ASSIST IN REPATRIATING THE REMAINING PRISONERS AND WOULD IMMEDIATELY CONVEY IT TO MY GOVERNMENT. I WAS SURE HMG WOULD CONSIDER IT PROMPTLY AND WOULD WELCOME THE PRACTICAL AND POLITICAL MOTIVES WHICH INSPIRED IT.

4. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT THE FAILURE OR INABILITY OF THE ARGENTINE REGIME TO CONFIRM PUBLICLY THAT HOSTILITIES WERE AT AN END REMAINED A SERIOUS OBSTACLE AND POSED A PRACTICAL RISK TO OUR FORCES. THE TASK OF RESTORING PEACE IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC WAS DAUNTING, NEITHER WE NOR OUR FRIENDS (NOR ARGENTINA'S) COULD EVEN BEGIN TO TACKLE THIS UNTIL THE ARGENTINES BROUGHT THEMSELVES

19/6/82

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TO AN EXPLICIT CONFIRMATION. WE WOULD WELCOME ANY HELP THE COLOMBIANS COULD GIVE TO SECURE THIS. LEMOS AGREED (BUT OFFERED NO FURTHER SUGGESTIONS). HE REPEATED THE TERMS OF THE JOINT OFFER AND SAID THAT IN PRACTICE COLOMBIAN ASSISTANCE WOULD BE IN THE FORM OF AIRCRAFT.

5. I SAID THAT I WISHED TO KEEP IN TOUCH. LEMOS SAID THAT HE WOULD BE IN BOGOTA ON 19 AND 20 JUNE. ON 21-24 JUNE INCLUSIVE HE WOULD BE IN NEW YORK FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT. HE EXPECTED TO SPEAK ON 23 JUNE, AND MADE THE POINT THAT HE WOULD BE GOING EARLY IN ORDER TO HEAR THE PRIME MINISTER'S ADDRESS. ALTHOUGH THE QUOTE JOINT OFFER UNQUOTE CLEARLY FALLS SHORT OF A FULL RESPONSE TO THE REQUEST IN YOUR TUR (AND MAY NOT BE ONE WHICH YOU WILL WISH OR NEED TO TAKE UP), IT IS A FURTHER DEMONSTRATION OF COLOMBIAN READINESS TO ACT POSITIVELY WITHIN THE LIMITS OF WHAT THEY BELIEVE TO BE THE POSSIBLE FOR THEM. SUBJECT TO THE VIEWS OF HM AMBASSADORS AT LIMA AND BRASILIA, IT WOULD ALSO SEEM TO BE DESIRABLE TO SHOW PROPER ATTENTION TO AN INITIATIVE BY THREE GOVERNMENTS WHICH ARE NICELY BALANCED IN TERMS OF THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARDS HMG AND ARGENTINA OVER THE FALKLANDS. I THEREFORE VERY MUCH HOPE DUE NOTICE CAN BE TAKEN OF LEMOS DURING HIS VISIT TO NEW YORK AND THAT IF AT ALL POSSIBLE HE CAN BE RECEIVED AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL.

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ROBSON

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